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Claim Amendments

10/13/10

Please amend claims 72-79 as shown below.

Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-71 (Cancelled)

72. (Currently amended) A database searching apparatus comprising:
a search engine web server operative to provide search results including search listings according to rank; and
a database searchable by the search engine web server and including a plurality of search listings, at least some search listings being associated with advertisers, the search listing associated with an advertiser including a search term specified by the advertiser, and
a desired rank specified by the advertiser for a search listing and a maximum cost per click (maximum CPC) and a cost per click (CPC) associated with the desired rank for the search term and the advertiser,
an account management server means in data communication with the database to for automatically adjust adjusting the CPC for a search listing in response to advertiser inputs, [[:]]
wherein, when the advertiser enters a new search listing or changes the maximum CPC of a search listing, the account management server means is operative to:
adjust the CPC of the advertiser's search listing to maintain the desired rank,

adjust the CPC of the advertiser's search listing to move the search listing to the highest rank possible without exceeding the maximum CPC of the advertiser's search listing,
adjust the CPC of the advertiser's search listing to maintain the CPC of the advertiser's search listing less than or equal to the maximum CPC of the advertiser's search listing,
~~set the CPC of the advertiser's search listing no higher than necessary,~~
and
avoid setting the CPC of the advertiser's search listing so that desired rank ranks and CPCs of other advertisers are not maintained.

73. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 72, wherein the database further stores a timestamp associated with the each desired rank, the timestamp indicating a time the search listing was entered or changed.

74. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 73, wherein the search engine is configured to:
receive a search request;
locate one or more search listings having a matching relationship with the search request; and
order search results from the one or more search listings using the CPC associated with the one or more search listings.

75. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 72, further comprising:
an account manager accessible by the advertiser to vary at least one of the maximum CPC and the desired rank for a respective search listing bid and ~~desired rank~~.

76. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 75, wherein the account manager is further accessible by the advertiser to vary the maximum CPC-for two or more possible ranks specified by the advertiser.

77. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 72, further comprising:

one or more software agents configured to:

receive advertiser bid information; and

act on the advertiser bid information to adjust the CPC for a specified search listing.

78. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 77, wherein the one or more software agents is configured to:

increase the current CPC of the specified search listing if the rank of the specified search listing can be improved without exceeding the maximum CPC, otherwise, not adjust the current CPC of the specified search listing;
and

decrease the current CPC of the specified search listing without moving the specified search listing to a rank worse than the desired rank.

79. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 78, wherein the one or more software agents are configured to decrease the current CPC of the specified search listing only if no other search listing will have its respective current CPC increased to decrease the rank of the specified search listing, otherwise, to not adjust the current CPC of the specified search listing.

80-86 (Cancelled)